Membership 2021-22 in Scotland

Working with our members to safeguard academic standards, enhance the student learning experience and secure the global reputation of UK higher education
What QAA Membership means for you

Our work in Scotland

As a QAA Member in Scotland, we will continue to work with you across the full range of familiar activities specific to Scotland, working collaboratively to support your commitment to enhance and enrich the learning experience of students.

We will continue to play our part in our overall Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF) in partnership with the Scottish Government, Scottish Funding Council (SFC), Universities Scotland, National Union of Students (Scotland), Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs), and Advance HE.

As you will know, the QEF has five interrelated elements which are:

**Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR)**

We will continue to provide external quality arrangements that are valued and respected, providing assurance to the SFC enabling it to meet its statutory duty, as well as to governing bodies, institutional partners, staff, students, graduates and the wider public.

Our approach will remain enhancement-led and responsive to the context of each institution. It will continue to embrace regular engagement through annual discussions, as well as the full benefits of periodic review by peers.

In 2021–22, we will complete the ELIR 4 cycle. We will be publishing an end of cycle national report on lessons learned through the ELIR 4 programme, identifying best practices and challenges for the sector for 2022 and beyond. In addition, we will be taking forward a project to determine the next iteration of ELIR. This will involve extensive engagement and consultation with institutions, students and stakeholders to ensure that the next review model matches the current policy context and the needs of the sector.

We will be refreshing the expert pool of reviewers specifically selected and trained for the next iteration of ELIR. We will also run a series of events to ensure that institutions are prepared and ready to engage positively with the next review method.
Scotland’s flagship Enhancement Themes

Working with the Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC) and the Theme Leaders’ Group, we will continue to plan and manage national Enhancement Themes. 2021-22 will see further exploration of a new Theme – Resilient Learning Communities – with the aims of supporting increased diversity in the student population and increased flexibility in the modes of delivery.

This Theme will close with an International Conference in 2023 that also celebrates 20 years of the Quality Enhancement Framework in Scotland. To coincide with this, we have commissioned external experts to evaluate the impact of the Enhancement Theme work in Scotland over the last 20 years, both within Scotland and internationally.

The new Theme has already included many collaborative and sector-wide projects.

Collaborative projects

- Decolonising the Curriculum in the Time of Pandemic
- Student Mental Wellbeing within our BAME and LGBTQ+ Learner Communities
- Personalised Approaches to Resilience and Community (PARC)
- Re-imagining Resilience for Taught Postgraduate Students
- Exploring the Potential of Micro-credentials and Digital Badging
- Programme Leadership: Strengthening Resilience, Supporting Learning Communities
- Resilient Academic Leadership

Sector-wide projects

- Addressing the Digital Divide
- Higher Education: More than a Degree
- Anti-Racist Curriculum
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- QAA Back Catalogue Review and Web Development
- Enhancement Theme Evaluation
- Scottish Sector Learning from COVID-19
- Stories of Resilience

The Enhancement Themes website will remain a public resource and continue to demonstrate across the globe the special commitment we have to enhancement in Scotland. The Themes and their resources will continue to promote how HE in Scotland reflects and innovates so that it remains at the forefront of excellence.

www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk
Focus On - practical support for specific issues

Our Focus On projects have been an outstanding success, drawing on topics emerging as themes from a number of ELIR reports and endorsed as priorities by you. By early in the 2021-22 academic year we will have reviewed and reorganised our bank of Focus On resources to ensure our future work builds on the accumulated learning. This will ensure the resources are easy to find.

We also intend to run a new Focus On project in 2021-22 on a theme of current importance to the sector and agreed with SHEEC.

Supporting collaborative engagement and sector-wide discussion

As part of membership, QAA Scotland will continue to support SHEEC, leadership of the Enhancement Theme and The Quality Forum. Equally, we will continue to support the active participation of students as partners in our work and in quality enhancement in Scotland.

We will be active in contributing to Universities Scotland and SFC committees, and the development and implementation of relevant government initiatives and priorities (such as the Learner Journey and Widening Access), as well as participating in working groups where our expertise is of value. We will continue to participate in SFC’s Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability as we look to work more closely with providers in the college sector.

QAA Scotland will continue to undertake thematic and analytical reporting to help the sector gain insight into what Scotland does well and where there are challenges to address, including our work on supporting academic integrity and responding to the move to a digital environment.

These reports will include annual statements of assurance, annual overview reports for SFC that identify shared challenges and strengths, and thematic reports on the outcomes from ELIR. Discussed at sector level, these help to inform decision-making and action planning where it is needed.
In 2021–22, our Membership offer spans five interconnected themes.

- **Beyond COVID-19** - The Future of Digital and Blended Delivery
- **Evaluation and Data-Based Decision-Making**
- **Global Engagement and TNE**
- **Creating Inclusive Learning Communities - Flexible Pathways and Pedagogies**
- **Securing Academic Standards and Quality**

Exploring good practice and creating practical resources.

- Digital and blended pedagogy, including the future role of the campus.
- Assessment in digital and blended delivery.
- Embedding work to align learning outcomes with assessment.
- Assessing skills and competencies.
Evaluation and Data-Based Decision-Making

Enhancing practice and evidencing impact.

- Evidence-based decision-making.
- Moving beyond the metrics to evaluate what really counts in higher education.
- Exploring effective approaches in evaluation and review.
- Influencing, advising and informing governments, sector bodies and providers.

Global Engagement and TNE

Supporting internationalisation across topics and regions.

- Engaging with governments, international agency partners and policy forums.
- Maintaining strong partnerships across Europe, providing a voice for UK higher education in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).
- Support for international students (in the UK and overseas).
- Enhancing quality and managing risk in transnational education (TNE) and international partnerships.
- Supporting members working with overseas partners through our country programme.

Creating Inclusive Learning Communities
- Flexible Pathways and Pedagogies

An imaginative enhancement offer to help providers deliver inclusive, flexible learning opportunities.

- Successful student transitions into higher education, postgraduate study and employment.
- Flexible pathways and modular qualifications.
- Inclusion and accessibility in the curriculum and student experience.
- Enterprise and entrepreneurship.
- Work-based learning, apprenticeships, links with employers and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs).
- Student mental health and wellbeing.
- Embedding Education for Sustainable Development.
- Promotion and ongoing development of the Access to HE Diploma.
Securing academic standards and assuring quality through UK-wide reference points.

- Academic integrity including creating and sharing practical guidance and support for staff and students.
- Degree algorithms and degree classifications including exploring the impact of changes in assessment.
- Subject Benchmark Statements including progressing a review and refresh of Statements to ensure they are inclusive and valuable for subject communities.
- Characteristic Statements including developing new Statements for areas such as micro-credentials.
- Qualifications and credit frameworks including devising supporting resources to embed the Credit Framework for England in programme design. Also, as key members of the ‘five nations group’, working with qualification regulators, funders and related bodies across the UK and Ireland to ensure approaches to qualifications frameworks and credit continue to be clearly understood.

Find out more

For more information on QAA Membership, visit our web pages which provide additional details on the full range of our work with, and for, our members.

www.qaa.ac.uk/membership